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ABSTRACT

This booklet was developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to acquaint adults with products which research has shown to be hazardous to children. The booklet includes discussions of bicycles, toys, playground equipment, flammable fabrics, poisons, swimming pools, fireworks, and household products. Each discussion includes a general overview of the product and possible safety hazards associated with its use. Also included are general tips for buying, using, maintaining, storing and disposing of the products concerned. In addition, each discussion includes recent CPSC or other governmental regulations affecting the manufacture, sale, or use of these products. (BD)

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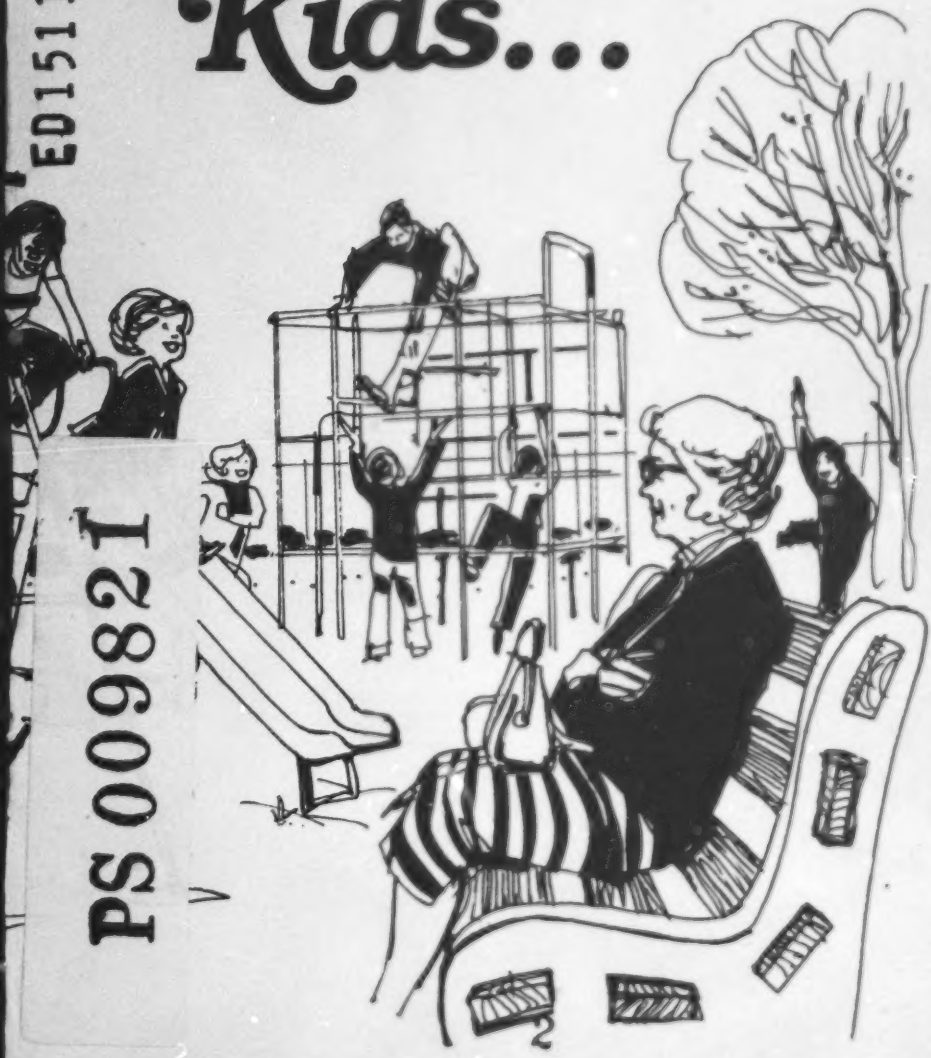

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Each year in the United States, approximately 21 million people are injured and around 25,000 killed in home accidents. The majority of these injuries and deaths are product related. The annual cost of home injuries exceeds 5.6 billion dollars.

Congress recognized the urgent need for Federal regulations to ensure safer consumer products when it passed the Consumer Product Safety Act in 1972. The Act called for the creation of a new, independent Federal regulatory agency. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission was activated on May 14, 1973 and directed by Congress to:

- protect the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products;
- assist consumers in evaluating the comparative safety of consumer products;
- develop uniform safety standards for consumer products and to minimize conflicting State and local regulations; and
- promote research and investigation into causes and prevention of product-related deaths, illnesses, and injuries.

The Commission has jurisdiction over more than 10,000 products used in the home, school, and public places. In its efforts to protect the public from serious product-associated injuries, the Commission needs the help of every consumer, young and old.

To report a hazard or a product-related injury, write to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C. 20207. In the continental United States, call the toll-free hotline—800-638-2666. Maryland residents only, call 800-492-2937.

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is for adults who are concerned about children, parents, expectant parents, teachers, day care workers – people who find themselves in one way or another responsible for the care and the safety of young people.

Growing up is a learning experience that doesn't end at some predetermined time. It is a continuous experience, one that should ultimately lead to maturity and good judgment. The problem with learning experiences is that some experiences are painful. Some are fatal, or result in prolonged disability.

There is no way we can eliminate all accidents from a child's experience. What we must attempt to do is to minimize the seriousness of the accidents he or she will have and to eliminate, as much as possible, those conditions that might lead to fatality.

In this booklet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has concerned itself with some of the products that its research has shown to be most hazardous to children. The booklet is intended to be an overview of safety concerns, not an in-depth analysis of these products. More specific information is available on each product if you need it. But in most cases the tips and suggestions listed here will be enough to minimize the hazards, and to maximize your awareness and stimulate your own good judgment in protecting children against potential hazards.

BICYCLES

Remember when you were a child and you got your first bike? Man, that was living! Remember going "no hands" or playing "chicken"? Sure, you fell down, many times; but you weren't seriously hurt, and the thrill was worth it. But things have changed over the years, haven't they? The old dirt road has been replaced with a four-lane highway. Somehow everyone seems to be moving at a faster pace, looking out for himself. Riding a bike in today's world can be hazardous to your health.

Kids still love bikes. Riding is a healthful exercise and fun experience that children should not be denied. But there is a sobering statistic that confronts all adults, especially parents: more than 400,000 people go to hospital emergency rooms each year because of bike accidents. Two-thirds of these accident victims are children under the age of 14.

Obviously you can't keep young children in sight every minute. But you can be sure that you know about bikes and the riding problems that your children face today. You can help them have the same fun you had "way back when," and with fewer spills.

The main hazards involving bicycles are:

- *Loss of control*—because of faulty brakes; —because the bike is too large for the rider; or —because of riding double or hitting an obstacle.
- *Mechanical failure* of the brakes, wheels, steering, chain, gears, pedals or spokes.
- *Entanglement* of feet, hands or clothing in the bicycle.
- *Feet slipping* from the pedals.
- *Collision* with a car or another bicycle.

Sizing

A bicycle must be simple enough and small enough for a child to control. Don't try to save money by buying a bike the child will "grow into." If your child can't reach the ground with his feet, can't stop or steer his bike, he can't have as much fun and is more likely to fall.

Here's how to be sure you buy the right size bike:

A boy should be able to straddle the bicycle with one inch clearance above the top bar while his feet are flat on the ground and his legs straight.

A girl, riding a girl's bicycle, should be able to sit on the bicycle seat in an upright position with one leg straight and her foot on the ground. The other foot should comfortably reach the pedal at its lowest position.

Handlebars should be adjusted so that the child does not have to bend forward into an uncomfortable position.

When you were a kid you most likely had little help in being "fitted" to a bike. Not so today. There is much literature available on the correct sizing of the bike to the rider. Most bicycle stores have such material available free of charge. Take time to read it, or to discuss the problem with the sales person, before you make that final purchase.

Riding

Remember, bike-riding requires skill. A child needs to practice riding in a safe area under adult supervision. Before you let children ride alone, be sure that they can ride a straight line and make turns and stops without difficulty. Be sure that they can operate the controls, especially the gears and handbrakes.

If your school district has a bicycle safety education program, encourage your child to participate.

Rules of the Road

Following the road rules is just as important as having a safe bicycle. Keep children out of traffic until they can understand and obey these rules:

- Stay to the right, moving in the same direction as car traffic.
- Don't ride double.
- Signal for turns.
- Walk the bike across intersections, with the traffic light if there is one.
- Ride single file.
- No horse play.

Kids forget. So it's necessary to remind them often of these rules. Once you think they know the rules, take time to observe them in action; then tell them again.

CPSC Regulation

There's a new bicycle regulation which became effective on May 11, 1976. It has been issued under the authority of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act. Included in the regulation are requirements that:

- Bikes must have no unfinished metal edges.
- The ends of cables and handlebars must be capped.
- Brakes must meet certain standards; sidewalk bikes without brakes must be labled "no brakes" and may not have a freewheeling coasting feature.
- Handlebars, forks and frames must meet certain strength tests.
- Chain-guards are required except on derailleur-type, multiple-sprocket, 10-speed bicycles.
- Pedals must have built-in tread construction.
- There must be front- and rear-facing reflectors in addition to reflectors on pedals; the front wheel must have a clear or amber reflector, and the rear wheel a clear or red one, or there must be reflectorized tires.

If your child has a bicycle which does not meet these new regulations, here's what to do:

- Hammer out all unfinished sharp edges; file down sharp points; cover any protruding bolts with heavy waterproof tape.
- Buy new grips for handlebars or cover them with heavy tape.
- Install a chain-guard if the bike doesn't have one.
- Install new tread-type pedals so the child's feet won't slip. All you need is an adjustable wrench.
- Attach reflectors or reflectorized tape on fenders, wheels, frame and chain guard.

Okay—so accidents are bound to happen. But with a little help from you, hopefully they'll result in only a minor scrape or bruise.

Today's kids face different traffic problems and they ride more complicated bikes. They need your help to get started right. So remember these bike safety tips:

Buying

Choose a bike to suit the child's present size and skill. Know how to correctly "fit" the bike to your child. Look for a bike which has –

- no sharp edges.
- no protrusions, such as shift levers, especially along the top tube where they could injure the thigh or groin.
- no cracks in the frame.
- brakes that stop quickly, smoothly, easily.
- chain guard.
- front, rear, pedal and spoke reflectors.
- tires with good treads.
- proper seat and handlebar adjustments.
- enough clearance between frame and front wheel so that the toe of a shoe could not get caught there.

If you are getting an older bike, you should plan to do some work to bring it up to the CPSC regulations.

Using

Adjust the seat and handlebars to fit the child.

Don't let a child ride while wearing a long coat or scarf; such items can catch in wheels, chain or pedals. Get the child a leg clip to prevent long pants from getting trapped in the chain.

If night riding is necessary, in addition to the required reflectors, attach high quality front (white) and rear (red) lights to the bicycle. Attach reflective tape to the child's clothes.

Teach the child the rules of the road. (See p. 3)

Maintaining

Regularly check brakes, pedals and reflectors and tighten frame nuts and bolts.

Inflate tires to the recommended pressure.

Repair or replace wobbly wheels, missing or loose spokes, worn tires and other faulty parts.

Storing

Store the bike in a dry place, and don't forget to lock it securely.

The behavior and attitudes that you teach your child today, as he or she enjoys that first bike, will stay with your child when he or she gets that first car. And that's a whole other story, isn't it?

TOYS

The next best thing to being a kid with a new toy is being the father of a kid with a new toy. You know, Dad has to see how the toy works before he turns it over to Junior. Usually by the time he has finished playing with it himself, the kid is having fun playing with the box it came in! Sometimes a child is better off if he does play with the box.

Toys are no longer as simple and indestructible as they used to be. In an attempt to create toys that are "educational," "motivational," or "psychological," industry has unwittingly managed to create toys which are oftimes "dangerous." Every year about 175,000 children are seriously injured by toys that cut, puncture, burn, shock, or choke them. Many of these are caused by playthings or parts of playthings being caught in a child's throat, blocking the air passage, causing suffocation. Never give a child a plastic bag or an object covered with removable plastic film or other plastic covering.

You can protect your child from many hazards by being careful when you purchase a new toy. Think about how the child will use, or misuse it. Watch for these more obvious concerns:

Is the toy . . .
- strongly constructed?
- without sharp edges or points?
- free of small parts that can be swallowed?
- labelled flame resistant (fabric products)?
- electrically safe?

Toys should be built to withstand investigation by the curious. Wheels on wooden toys should be attached with screws; pull cords should be fastened with staples – not carpet tacks or thumb tacks – or they should be tied through a neat round hole in the toy. Edges should be rolled or turned in and corners rounded. All toys should be made of material which, if broken, will not produce sharp edges.

Be a label reader. Look for age recommendations, such as, *"Not recommended for children under three."*

As children grow older, they want items that are more exciting – and more dangerous: chemistry sets, archery sets, air rifles, tool kits, sharp knives. Of course children should not be denied the fun of more sophisticated toys, but a stay in the hospital is no fun at all. So, adults have to give some extra supervision while these are in use.

Discuss with your child the safe use of every new toy, and be sure he or she is old enough and mature enough to understand and follow your instructions.

The space available for use of playthings should be carefully considered. For example, a pair of roller skates or a skateboard given to a youngster living in an area where sidewalks are not paved and there is no rink is an invitation for him to try out the nearest paved street or highway.

CPSC Action on Toys

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has an extensive program on toy safety. The Commission has stopped the sale of a number of toys that present electrical, thermal or mechanical hazards. Typical of this group were:

- rattles that could break easily and expose small loose objects and sharp edges.
- "squeeze" toys having easy-to-remove squeakers.
- toy guns or caps making a very loud noise.
- lawn darts. (These may still be sold for adults in sporting goods stores.)

In 1973 a safety standard on lead paint coating hazards to children became effective.

The law also includes imported products. Today it is unlikely that a lead or lead-painted toy will be found in stores. Repainted, "hand-me-down" and antique toys may still constitute a hazard to children.

Buying

When buying a toy, consider how your child might misuse it. Assume he will try to take it apart, taste it, stick his fingers into it, and throw it.

Using

Watch your child play with the toy and satisfy yourself that it is safe for *him or her*. Remember the child's habits and tendencies, and think about how these relate to the potential hazards.

Maintaining

Inspect toys periodically for signs of chipping or breakage. Worn wooden pieces may develop splinters, easily remedied by sanding and repainting.

Make sure that "button eyes" on dolls and teddy bears are securely attached.

Repair electrical toys at the first sign of frayed wiring or other hazardous condition.

Storing

Set aside a place to store toys when they are not in use, and train the kids to put toys away when play is done. Small children should not have access to the toys of older children.

A toy storage box should have a lightweight lid and its own device for holding the lid open so it won't slam shut on the child's neck. The lid should have no protrusions or recessed areas which could make it more difficult for the child to escape should the lid accidentally close. Check the closing device to make sure it won't pinch.

Disposing

Toys that are broken beyond repair should be disposed of out of the sight and reach of children.

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PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Nothing is more exciting to a child than a playground – except maybe a circus. For a child, a playground full of slides, ladders, seesaws, swings, things to climb on and over and through is a circus. And he's part of it! Can we possibly keep children from going absolutely wild in a playground? No way. Can we keep them from getting hurt while they play? We can try.

More than 100,000 children under 15 receive serious injuries each year as the result of playground accidents. Many of these accidents can be avoided if we note carefully the equipment that is put into the playground and teach our children how to play safely on it.

Here are a few major hazards of playground equipment.

- exposed, sharp edges.
- open-ended hooks.
- hinges or other moving parts that can pinch.
- heavy swing seats, that can strike with dangerous impact.
- narrow ladders or excessively steep slides.
- rings or openings in which a child might get his head caught.
- swinging and other moving parts placed too close together so that children using them can bump into each other.
- construction that can catch clothing or little fingers.

Most playground injuries are the result of falls caused either by a child's own adventuring or by the exuberance of his playmates. You can help your child play safely by teaching him these playground rules:

- no shoving, pushing or fighting.
- take turns on slides; wait until the child ahead is out of the way.
- stay far away from moving swings.
- don't twist swing chains or swing empty seats.

CPSC Action on Playground Equipment

New mandatory regulations for the construction and manufacture of both home and public playground equipment are being considered by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Mandatory safety requirements could significantly reduce both the number and severity of accidents, but it will be some time before such regulations can be issued. Even the safest equipment, however, can be involved in accidents. 9

Buying

Look for these features:

- no sharp edges or open-ended hooks.
- *capped nuts and bolts.*
- no moving parts that can pinch or crush fingers.
- lightweight swing seats to prevent serious injury in the event one hits a child.
- slide with not-too-steep angle and with a wide and deep step on the ladder.
- rings and other openings large enough, or small enough so that a child's head cannot get caught.
- equipment anchoring devices that hold firmly to the ground.

Installing

Install equipment at least 6 feet away from walls, fences, and other play equipment. See that the equipment is anchored firmly in a grassy- or soft-ground surface, never on a concrete or other hard-paved surface. Legs, however, may be anchored with concrete below the surface to prevent tipping over. Pegs, if used, should be driven well into the ground.

Using

After instructing the children on how to use the equipment, observe them at play long enough to correct bad habits, and always be sure that an adult is within calling distance in case of a mishap.

Maintaining

Make a periodic check for loose nuts, bolts, and clamps. Oil moving metal parts. Sand and paint rusted areas as they develop. Check for splinters on wooden parts.

FLAMMABLE FABRICS

Do you remember the first time your mother slapped your hand when you were a child? You were undoubtedly very young. Chances are it was to keep you from touching something hot or playing with matches. The fear of seeing a child burned or setting his clothing on fire is shared by all adults, yet recent statistics show that about 10,000 people are injured each year in accidents connected with flammable fabrics. Children are the most frequent victims.

Clothing fires can occur to children playing with matches or cigarette lighters, playing around stoves and heaters, or getting too close to outdoor fires. Clothing fires frequently affect large areas of the child's body with third-degree burns and lead to painful suffering, costly medical treatment, and severe emotional impact on the child and his family.

The problem of clothing fires is complex in that the flammability of a garment is affected by a number of factors: the basic fiber or blend used in making the fabric, the weight and weave of the fabric, surface texture, and design of the garment.

New standards for children's sleepwear have resulted in some encouraging results, although conclusive evidence is not yet available. The new standards appear to be working. Injury trends associated with children's burn injuries in recent years have shown that the percentage of children surviving burn injuries is increasing, and the total percentage of burn deaths associated with children's sleepwear is decreasing. This is encouraging news. But as adults, there are still some precautions we can take to protect children from serious burns:

- Never let a child go near fire, no matter what kind of clothing he or she is wearing.
- Be especially careful when a child is wearing full-flowing, fluffy garments of sheer material.
- Dress small children for play in clothes made of slow-burning material, such as denim.
- Keep children away from stoves, unprotected heaters, unscreened fireplaces, and barbeque grills.
- Instruct baby sitters regarding the protection of children from burns.
- Make sure all members of the family know what to do if someone's clothing catches on fire. The person must not be allowed to run because this would fan the flames and accelerate burning.

Remove the affected clothing, if possible, and force the victim into a horizontal position. If you are outdoors, roll him or her on the ground and use anything available to smother the fire, such as water, sand or an overcoat. If indoors, roll a heavy coat, rug or other heavy fabric over the victim.

Technological advances and regulations can help prevent accidents to some extent, but most tragedies result from carelessness or lack of supervision.

Children usually survive the falls, pinches, cuts, and even the breaks of growing up, with little to show for them but a healthy awareness and an improved judgment. Not so if he was the victim of a serious burn, because scars remain with him for life.

Standards will help, but after that there is something you can do—keep children away from fire.

CPSC Regulations on Flammable Fabrics

To help protect the public, the Federal government has taken several steps to make fabrics less flammable. Standards have been set for the flammability of, among other items, carpets and rugs, mattresses and children's sleepwear in sizes 0 to 14. Some fabrics must be chemically treated to meet standards of flame-resistance for use in children's sleepwear.

Flame-resistant fabrics are *not* flame-*proof*.

- *They slow down the spread of fire and* stop burning when the ignition source is removed.
- Some degree of flame-resistance is built into some fabrics—wool, modacrylics, vinyon—by the nature of their chemistry.
- Some synthetics, like nylon, polyester, acrylics, and acetates, melt into hot sticky substances that can cause serious burns. These and such fabrics as cotton, rayon, linen, and some fabric blends must be treated with flame-retardant chemicals in order to meet CPSC standards.

Some stores may still be selling sleepwear that was manufactured before the standards became effective. These stores must display such sleepwear separate from the sleepwear that does meet the safety standards. Bolts of material intended or advertised for use in children's sleepwear must also be labeled.

Buying

Buy flame-resistant fabrics and clothing when possible. Tightly-woven, heavy fabrics usually burn more slowly than sheer, loosely-woven ones; high-nap materials are likely to burn faster than smooth ones.

Washing

Flame-resistant fabrics may require special washing, depending on the material and on the chemical treatment. Follow the instructions on the garment label.

Extra Precautions

Store flammable liquids in a well-ventilated area, away from any flame source – and out of the sight and reach of children. Fuels such as gasoline should be stored away from your living quarters.

Supervise children closely around space heaters, hot irons, stoves, lighted cigarettes, and matches.

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POISONS

Children are naturally curious, and one of their strongest instincts is to put newly discovered things in their mouths. It has been estimated that each year more than a million children are accidentally poisoned. Many are seriously injured, many die. Most are under five years old.

Potentially poisonous products are often sold in attractive, brightly colored packages. Kids will investigate anything that catches their eyes and they are not able to read the warnings on the label. It is up to the older members of families to protect small children from these hazardous products. Care and concern is what is required.

Most families keep several kinds of hazardous substances around the house. Some of the most common are:

- bleach, ammonia, lye
- prescription medicine
- aspirin, pain relievers, and sedatives
- furniture polish
- cleaners for stoves, drains, and toilet bowls
- lighter fluids
- turpentine, paint thinners and removers, gasoline, kerosene
- insect sprays and weed killers

Any of these substances can seriously poison a child.

Take time to watch for these hazardous products. "Poison-proof" your apartment, house, garage or school by:

- keeping no more household substances and medicines than are actually needed.
- keeping all poisons securely stored where children cannot reach them.
- tightly capping cans and bottles.
- not leaving potentially hazardous products unattended.
- storing internal medicines separately from other household products.

U.S. Government Action on Poisons

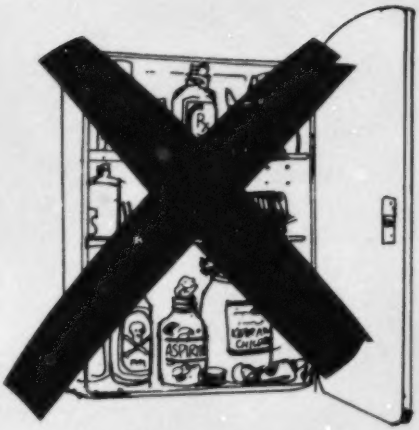
In 1970, Congress passed the Poison Prevention Packaging Act. Some potentially poisonous substances must now be sold in child-resistant packages. These packages are designed so that children will have difficulty opening them, but most adults will be able to open them easily.

The substances that come under this Act of Congress include:

- aspirin (the most common poison)
- furniture polish
- oil of wintergreen
- all controlled and most prescription drugs

- lye, oven cleaners, drain cleaners
- turpentine
- lighter fluids
- windshield washer solution
- anti-freeze
- sulfuric acid
- iron preparations (containing more than 500 mg. of iron)

If your child has swallowed or is affected by a poison, find out what the product was. Read the label for first aid instructions. Call a physician or Poison Control Center immediately. Be sure to take the container with you if you go to a hospital emergency room or Poison Control Center.



Buying

Avoid buying more of a hazardous substance than you are going to use right away. Read the warning labels. If you have a choice, buy products that have safety caps.

Using

Don't encourage children to think that medicine tastes like candy, and don't give or take medicine in the dark.

Keep children out of the area when using hazardous products and don't use the products around food or in places where children will play. Fumes and residues can linger in the atmosphere and on objects. If you are called away from the work area, take the product with you or place it tightly capped out of the reach of children.

Storing

Keep medicines in a cabinet that is out of the reach of children. Lock it, if possible. Store other substances, such as cleaners, separate from medicines. If you carry medicine in your purse or coat pocket, keep an eye on it while children are around or place out of reach.

Leave hazardous products in their original containers. Don't store them under the kitchen sink, behind the toilet, or any other place a child can reach.

Disposing

Leftover products of a hazardous nature should be discarded promptly and properly. Any that are placed in the trash should be buried well under other items. Medicine that is no longer needed can be flushed down the toilet. (Rinse the container, then discard it.)

SWIMMING POOLS

Most children love to swim. As a sport or just for exercise and fun, swimming is a big part of a child's world. Unfortunately, many kids today will never know the fun of skinny-dipping in the old mud hole or the thrill of jumping or falling into the cool pond from the tire swing tied to the old oak tree. They have to use the crowded neighborhood pool with its hard bottom and slippery decks. Progress has its price.

It's no wonder the most common accidents around swimming pools are caused by slipping and falling on pool decks. Kids love to run when they're having fun. To help minimize these and other accidents that occur at public pools as well as private ones, there are a few safety tips you should keep in mind:

- Nonslip surfaces should be installed on decks, diving boards and ladders.
- Pool depths should be clearly marked.
- A safety floating line should separate the shallow side from the deeper water.
- Slides for use by children should be installed where the water is at least 3 feet deep; more depth is required for older children and adults.
- Water depth beneath diving boards should conform to safe standards.
- A pool should not be accessible to a child through a door or window of the house.
- A private pool should be enclosed by a fence at least 6 feet high with a gate that locks.
- Wading pools should be emptied when play is over.
- Children should be encouraged to learn to swim well; that will be their best protection against drowning.

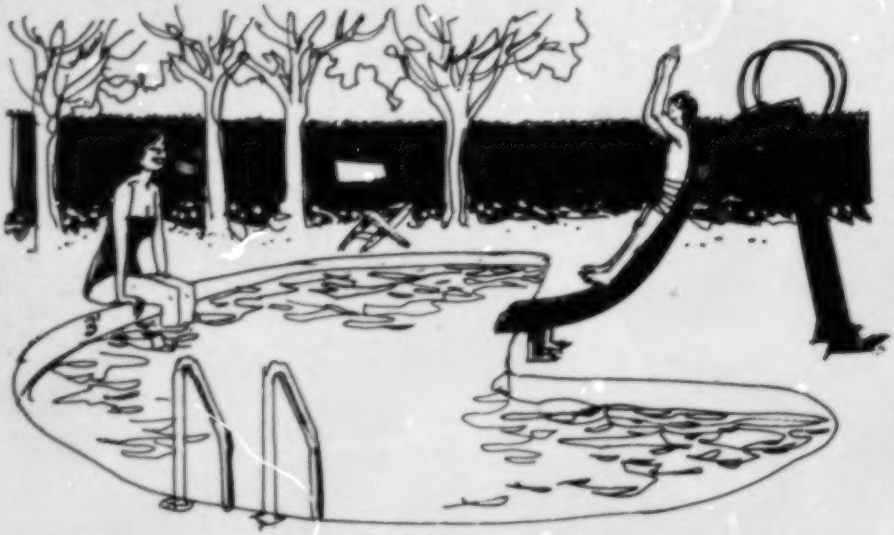
Familiarize your children with these safety rules:

- Stay in the part of the pool that is safe for your skill as a swimmer.
- Only one person on the diving or sliding board at a time.
- Wait until the person ahead is out of the way before taking your turn on the diving board or slide.
- No running or pushing in the pool area.
- To avoid stomach cramps, do not go swimming immediately after eating.
- Never swim alone.

U.S. Government Action

In January 1976, the Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a standard for swimming pool slides that includes the following requirements:

- Slides must meet certain standards of height and angle.
- Installation should be where the water is at least 3 feet deep (for children over 13, more depth is required).
- Instruction booklets showing proper installation must be provided to the purchaser of a pool slide.
- Warning signs must be displayed on the slide ladder showing proper sliding technique to avoid hitting the bottom.
- Slide ladder surfaces must meet non-skid standards.



Buying	Buy nonslip surfaces for pool decks, ladders and diving boards. See that the pool has no protruding pipes or sharp edges. Ladders should have handrails small enough for a child's grip.
Using	Always have the supervision of an adult swimmer while the pool is used by children. Use safety float lines and keep a rescue ring handy. Insist that children obey the safety rules.
Maintaining	Have all electrical equipment checked regularly. Keep surfaces clean.

FIREWORKS

When you are a child, it's fun to blow up a bottle or see how high a firecracker will lift a tin can into the air. It's when you grow older and a little wiser that you realize the dangers involved.

Before fireworks were restricted by many states, thousands of children each year lost eyes, fingers, and hands playing with the fireworks.

The safest thing you can do is to restrict your child to enjoying the public displays that are professionally presented each year. If you feel it is necessary to allow a closer look at fireworks, then handle them yourself and do so with extreme caution.

- Check fireworks carefully before using.
- Read directions and follow them.
- Set them off outdoors well away from houses and flammable materials.
- Use one at a time.
- Make sure they are pointed away from observers and that no one is close to the firing area.
- Have a bucket of water near in case of misfire.
- Don't give fireworks, including sparklers, to young children; they don't understand the dangers involved.
- Always supervise the use of fireworks by older children.
- Store fireworks in a dry, cool place.
- Avoid rough handling of fireworks.
- Keep fireworks in a container, not in your pockets.

CPSC Regulations on Fireworks

In 1967, regulations were issued under the authority of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act to prohibit the sale to consumers of the most dangerous types of fireworks:

- cherry bombs
- aerial bombs
- M-80 salutes
- large firecrackers containing more than two grains of powder
- mail-order kits intended for producing explosive fireworks.

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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's regulations lowering the permissible charge in firecrackers became effective December 6, 1976.

These new regulations provide performance specifications and a requirement that fuses burn at least three seconds but no longer than six seconds.

The regulations apply to firecrackers and fireworks sold or distributed to consumers. The regulations have no effect on State bans of firecrackers and generally have no effect on fireworks used for organized public displays.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Every year, more than 4 million people are injured in home accidents. Children, along with elderly people, are the most vulnerable.

Here are some of the products and conditions which require special adult safety awareness in order to protect children.

Electrical Products

The dangers of electrical shock or possible electrocution from faulty appliances or misuse of appliances must be a constant concern. Here are some reminders that will help you prevent serious injuries from electrical products in your home.

Cover unused outlets with plastic safety caps, available at drug and hardware stores.

Insert plugs firmly and completely into sockets.

Don't cover the ventilation holes on electrical products.

Don't touch electrical appliances (including electric toothbrushes and hair dryers) with wet hands or if standing on a damp surface. If water is spilled on an appliance, disconnect it immediately.

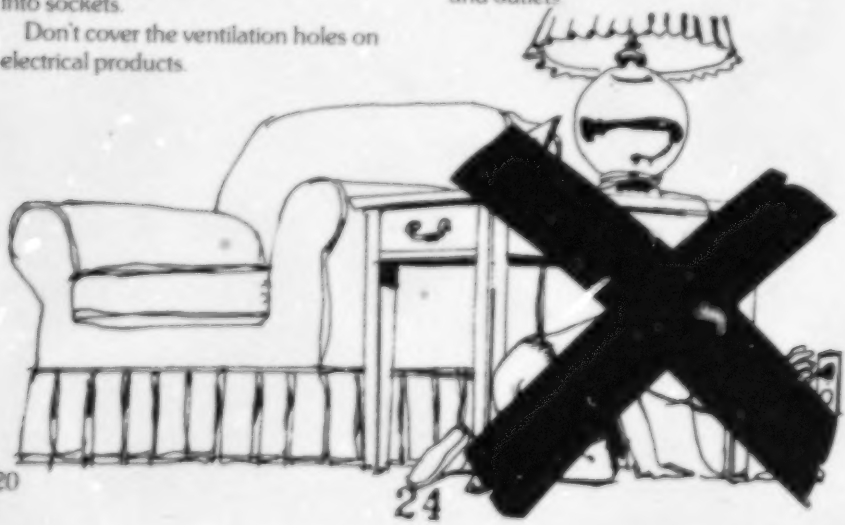
Unplug power tools immediately after use so that they cannot be turned on by a child, then store these tools in a safe place.

Don't overload electrical circuits by using multiplier plugs.

Don't run electrical cords under carpets or twist them over nails or other metal objects. Don't attach them with staples or nails.

If an appliance gives a "tingling" sensation when touched, unplug it and have it checked.

Teach children not to play with cords and outlets.



Lead-Containing Paint

Children are often poisoned by eating peeling lead paint from the windowsills, doors and walls of old buildings. Since January 1973, the U.S. Government has prohibited the sale of paints that have more than 0.5 percent lead content for use in homes or on toys. But there is much high lead content paint still available to children who live in old buildings.

Some children, usually between one and six years old, like to eat cracked and peeling paint. This can cause lead poisoning that, if not caught and treated early, can lead to brain damage and even death.

Here are some things you can do to lessen the danger of lead paint poisoning to children:

Examine the condition of all painted walls, ceilings, woodwork, windowsills and doors, especially those areas where children can reach. Scrape off any chipped and cracking paint, sand, and repaint.

Temporarily, the area could be sanded and covered with contact paper. To prevent breathing lead paint dust while doing any repair or restoration work, wear a face mask. Use a wet mop to clean up debris. Don't eat in the room where work is going on. Make sure plates, spoons and other eating utensils are not exposed to the dust.

Keep any paint flakes and chips swept up. Dispose of them so that children cannot eat them.

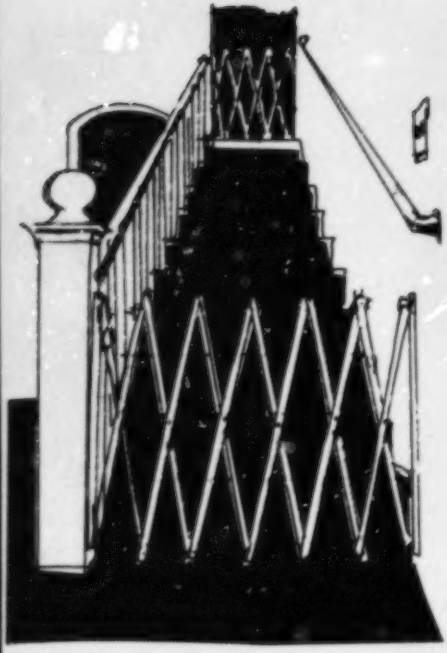
If you find signs that a child has been chewing the paint, such as toothmarks on a windowsill, call your doctor or local health clinic and have your children's blood lead level checked.

Examine older toys and children's furniture for peeling paint. Sand and repaint, if necessary.

Lead poisoning must be treated early if it is to be cured. Watch for these signs in your child:

- unusual irritation
- poor appetite
- stomach pains or vomiting
- persistent constipation
- sluggishness or drowsiness

If you think a child may have eaten lead paint, take him to a doctor or clinic immediately.



Stairs

The greatest single cause of home injuries is falls. Every year, 250,000 disabling injuries occur when people fall on stairs.[1] Here are the most important factors in making stairways safe, especially for children:

- All steps should be the same measure.
- Provide good lighting, with switches at both top and bottom of stairs.
- Paint the edge of each step white, or paint a white patch on the floor above the highest and below the lowest step.
- Balusters (the spindles between the stairs and the railing) should be no more than 4 inches apart, so that small children cannot squeeze through or get their heads stuck.
- Avoid single steps; they are usually unexpected. Where a small change in level is unavoidable, install a ramp.
- Install a handrail on each side of staircases. These should be 30 to 33 inches above the treads, and two or three inches away from the wall to allow for a good grip. If the handrail is no more than 2 inches in diameter, children will be able to hold it securely.
- When small children are present, folding gates or other barriers should be used, not only at the top, but also at the bottom of stairways.

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[1]National Safety Council figures.

- The stair surface should never be slippery. Use rubber mats or carpeting. Mixing paint with sand is a simple way to put a non-slip surface on basement or outdoor steps.
- If you use a stair carpet, be sure it fits the contour of the stair snugly and is securely fastened. Inspect frequently for worn spots and loose fastening which could trip people.
- Don't use throw rugs at the top or bottom of stairs.
- Keep steps clear at all times. Don't use stairways as a temporary storage area for toys, laundry or other items.

Teach children not to run on stairs, to take one step at a time and to use the handrail.

Floors

To lessen the chance that children will trip and fall, follow these rules:

If you have small "throw" rugs, be sure they can't easily slip on the floor.

- use a non-slip rug pad
- skid-proof the back of the rug with spray or adhesive strips, available in rug and department stores. (Sprays wear off and have to be reapplied periodically.)
- tack the rug in place.

Keep floors and floor-coverings in good condition. Check for tears and holes in rugs or lineoleum, and for loose tiles.

Clean up spills immediately. Be especially careful to clean oil and grease spills thoroughly.

When you wax your floors, choose a non-skid type wax. Use it sparingly, following the manufacturer's instructions. Warn others of newly-waxed floors.

Arrange furniture so that there are unobstructed traffic ways through the rooms.

Do not string extension cords, or other wires, across walkways.

Provide mats at front and back doors for wiping off snow, mud, rain and other slippery materials that could be tracked in from outside.

Install night lights in children's rooms, in halls, bathrooms, and stair areas.

Doors and Windows

Doors should swing into rooms, not into a flight of stairs or into a line of traffic.

All doors, including closet doors, should have handles for opening on both sides. Bedroom or bathroom doors which lock from the inside should have keys for unlocking from the outside.

Keep screens, guards and storm windows in good repair and firmly fastened.

Don't allow children to climb, sit or stand on windowsills.

If you have glass doors, here are some things you can do that will reduce the risk of injury:

- Instead of ordinary glass, install plastic or safety glass.
- Make the glass doors more visible: apply decals or colored tape at both children's and adults' eye level.
- Install safety bars on sliding glass doors. They show clearly when the door is closed, and also tend to prevent contact with the glass. Install protective screens or grilles over the glass in storm doors.
- Put furniture or planter boxes in front of the glass, so that it's not possible to run straight into it. Keep scatter rugs, toys and other small articles which may cause a child to trip, well away from glass doors.
- Enforce safety rules for children. Children should know that when they play near glass there is a danger of falling or being pushed through. Children should not push on the glass itself to open or close doors.

If you have glass shower enclosures it is especially important to keep the bathroom floor dry. Use non-skid rugs or mats. Use a suction-cup bathmat or rough-surfaced adhesive strips to give solid footing in the tub or shower stall. Install hand rails for support.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has recently issued a safety standard for architectural glazing materials, which includes doors, storm doors, bathtub and shower doors and enclosures, glazed panels, and sliding glass doors. This standard becomes effective July 6, 1977.

Knives

Many children are treated in emergency rooms each year for injuries associated with kitchen knives.

Keep knives out of reach of children, preferably in a special rack, not in a drawer. An unsuspecting person reaching a hand into the drawer can get cut.

Do not allow young children to use knives. Teach older children to use knives properly.

After you use a knife, put it away. A knife left out on the edge of a counter can be pulled off by a child, or fall on him.

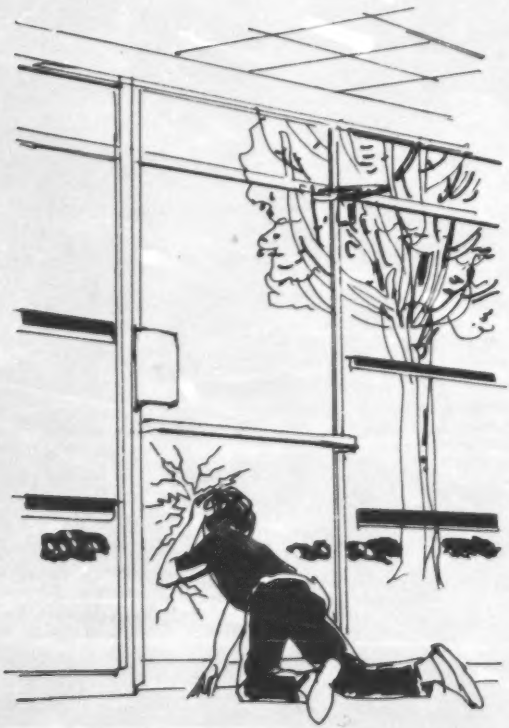
Stoves

Keep children away from the stove. Never allow them to lean or climb on it. Little children or babies can burn themselves seriously by falling against a hot oven surface, or reaching up to touch a burner.

If a little child must be in the kitchen with you while you cook, confine him to a playpen, or another area away from the stove.

When cooking, turn the pot handles away from the front of the stove. Otherwise a child may reach up and pull a hot pot over on himself.

Don't store things children want—such as cookies—over the stove. They will be tempted to climb up to get them.



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Bathroom Hazards

The bathroom is one of the most hazardous areas in the home. Soapy water and smooth surfaces combine to make falls the major cause of bathroom injuries.

To ensure a good, safe footing in the tub or shower, use a suction-cup rubber mat, or rough adhesive strips. Put in the mat before letting the water into the tub. (Some tubs are now made with a slip-resistant surface.)

Install at least two hand bars mounted securely on the wall.

Be sure all tub and shower accessories are free of sharp edges. If there is a glass enclosure, it should be safety glass.

Burns are caused when children fall into hot bath water, or turn on scalding hot water by mistake. Never leave a baby or small child alone in the bathroom. Test the water temperature before bathing a child.

Electrocutions often result from misuse of electrical appliances in the bathroom. Keep appliances such as radios, phonographs, hair dryers and sun lamps out of the bathroom. Never allow a child to touch an appliance with wet hands, while in the bathtub, or while standing on a damp floor.

Drownings often occur when adults leave children unattended. Never leave small children alone in the bathtub under any circumstances, even for a few seconds. Children can drown very quickly, and in very small amounts of water.

Do not leave razors where children can get them. Store and dispose of razor blades in closed containers.

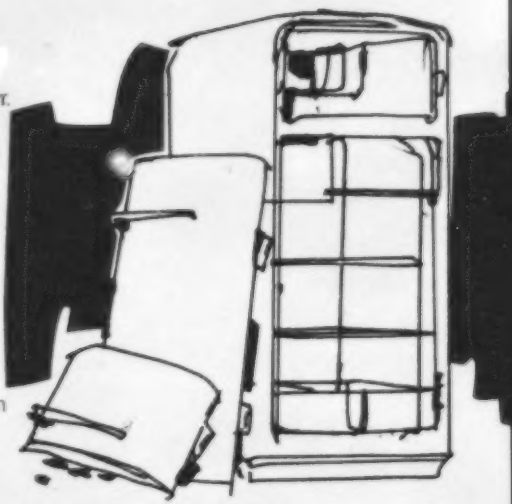
Store medicines in a special cabinet out of children's reach, and preferably locked.

Lawn Mowers

Do not allow children to operate or approach an operating lawn mower, or become passengers on a moving mower. Be aware that mowers, especially the rotary type, can pick up and throw hard objects such as small rocks or bits of wire with great force and distance.

Plastic Bags

Many children have been suffocated when they put plastic disposal or garment bags over their heads. The thin plastic sticks close to the face, preventing breathing. If clothes come back from the cleaner in thin plastic bags, tie the bags in knots and dispose of them. Never use these bags to waterproof a baby's or child's mattress.



Refrigerators

If you are discarding or temporarily storing a refrigerator or freezer, disconnect the power cord and remove the door. (In some areas, this is the law.) Children love to play in these units, and many have suffocated as a result. If for some reason you cannot remove the door, seal the refrigerator with a chain and padlock or strong tape.

Guns

If you must keep firearms in the house, keep them unloaded and under lock and key. Keep ammunition locked up in a different place. Treat every gun as though it were loaded, and teach children never to touch a real gun until they have received proper training.